

Marshall University
College of Education
And Professional Development

Doctoral Program in Leadership Studies



Student and Faculty Handbook

www.marshall.edu/lsedd

**Handbook of Record
AY 2025-26**

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Introduction and Program Mission

The purpose of this document is to provide faculty members and doctoral students with an understanding of policies and procedures related to the Marshall University Online Doctoral Program (EdD) in Leadership Studies (LS).

Marshall University was first granted the authority to offer a doctorate in education with a major in leadership studies in March 2002, representing a transition from a cooperative agreement with West Virginia University, which began in 1980. The program is administratively housed on Marshall University's South Charleston campus. All coursework is available online from faculty who possess decades of experience in distance learning and who are skilled in integrating the various features of the Blackboard delivery system to create a rigorous and collaborative learning environment.

The purpose of the EdD in Leadership Studies is to enhance leadership potential, while supporting personal and professional growth for conscientious individuals who seek to advance their roles as leaders in a wide range of fields. The foundational principle of the program is that the study of leadership informs the practice of leadership – and that effective practice grows not only from mastering the skills and knowledge necessary for decision-making, but grounding decision-making in a deep understanding of both ethics and historical and contemporary leadership theory.

The mission of the Leadership Studies EdD program is to prepare experienced practitioners to be reflective, ethical leaders and researchers who can contribute to their organizations, professions and communities. Program faculty are committed to creating a community of scholars through mentoring, engaging in collaborative research, and maintaining a focus on sound leadership practices. Program graduates are expected to demonstrate the following outcomes.

Goal 1. Collaboration: Collaborate and interact with faculty and peers through coursework and opportunities to present or publish.

Goal 2. Depth of Understanding: Apply and integrate learning experiences and knowledge in the field including theoretical models, concepts, and research.

Goal 3. Reflection: Demonstrate reflection, critical thought, and ability to analyze and synthesize information and data from course experiences and collaborative research activities.

Goal 4. Scholarship: Exhibit evidence of scholarship in the field through course completion and submission and/or acceptance of manuscripts for publication, or presentation at regional or national conferences.

Goal 5. Communication Skills: Demonstrate composure, professionalism and poise in writing, speaking, and presentation; employ effective organizational skills; demonstrate a working knowledge of multimedia; and adapt efficiently and effectively to change.

Goal 6. Professional Ethics: Understand and utilize ethical reasoning models; engage in ethical research processes.

Goal 7. Professionalism: Continue the pursuit of expertise in the profession, thus enhancing one's field(s) and communities by taking courses, attending seminars and acquiring any additional professional designations.

Goal 8. Research: Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of research knowledge and practices.

Acceptance into the Program

Admission Requirements

The decision to admit an applicant to doctoral work constitutes a significant institutional and faculty commitment in the form of advising, teaching, chairing or serving on student committees, collaboratively conducting and presenting research, evaluating assessments, and guiding the successful completion of the dissertation. Applicants should note that the decision to admit students to the doctoral program is a collective judgment of the program faculty and represents their determination of the likelihood that the candidate will succeed in all major phases of the degree program. These judgments take into account the applicant's professional experiences, communication and thinking skills, and other relevant capabilities and dispositions, both individually and relative to the characteristics of the entire, active applicant pool. Admission to the program is selective and competitive, thus, an applicant is not automatically admitted on the basis of meeting only the minimum criteria. A variety of performance measures will be considered during the admission application review via a formal and objective evaluation process.

Application and Admission Dates

The "Marshall University Graduate Application for Admission" must be completed and submitted with the appropriate application fee, with the applicant indicating they are seeking admission to the EdD program in Leadership Studies. The Leadership Studies Doctoral Program reviews application files once completed, with all required credentials submitted. The EdD program utilizes a selective and competitive admission process, for fall semester admission only. Review of completed applications will begin by February 1 each spring, prior to the fall term for which the applicant is seeking admission. Applications from well-qualified candidates received after February 1 will be considered for admission, on a rolling basis, while capacity remains in the program. The program may also choose to offer a waitlist option, at its sole discretion, for select admission terms, depending on applicant qualifications and available space in the program. All required application materials, including official transcripts, must be on file in the MU Graduate Admissions Office and the Leadership Studies EdD Office before admission requests will be considered. The following items are required for all students applying for admission to the LS EdD program.

Items Submitted to MU Graduate Admissions Office

Application: The "Marshall University Graduate Application for Admission" must be completed and submitted with the appropriate application fee. The application may be completed online at: [Graduate Admissions Application](#). The applicant indicates on the application that s/he desires to be accepted into the online doctor of education (EdD) program and specifies the major of Leadership Studies (major code GEJ0). The program major should be selected based upon past experience, career aspirations, and personal aptitudes of the applicant.

Transcripts: The applicant must request that official transcripts of all completed undergraduate and graduate degree programs be sent by the degree-granting institution(s) to the MU Graduate Admissions Office. A minimum graduate grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale is required in order to be considered for admission. A master's degree from an accepted, accredited institution is required for admission.

Admission Test Scores (optional): The applicant may request an official record of GRE test scores be sent directly from the required testing agency to the MU Graduate Admissions Office. Copies from applicants are not acceptable.

Goals Statement - The applicant must provide a goal statement, written in essay format, (500-750 words) which must address the following topics:

- professional experiences that provide a basis for considering the applicant's admission to the program;
- role of the EdD in the applicant's professional growth plan;
- personal strengths that will contribute to the applicant's success in the EdD program; and
- additional information the applicant deems relevant to the admissions process and decision.

The applicant's ability to synthesize ideas to the level required for work in this advanced degree program and the appropriateness¹ of the applicant's goals as they relate to the objectives of the EdD program will be assessed. The goals statement may be mailed or sent electronically as a Microsoft Word document.

Resume/CV: The applicant must provide a current professional CV or resume including previous publications (if available), educational and work experience, current address, phone number(s), and email address. These documents may also be submitted through one of the addresses above.

¹ If it is the applicant's goal to prepare for certification as a K-12 administrator, Marshall's EdD is *not* the correct program choice. The university does, however, offer an online master's degree and a post-master's certificate for that purpose.

Writing Sample:

Upon review of the completed application materials, applicants who are selected to submit a writing sample will be notified. Being invited to submit a writing sample does not guarantee admission to the program. Formal and established criteria will be utilized by program faculty to objectively review each submission.

Transfer Credits

The LS EdD program will accept up to six hours of previously earned course credits as long as those courses 1) correspond to current curricular requirements, and 2) were completed in doctoral programs at accepted, accredited institutions. Master's course credits will not be accepted. Proof of enrollment in a doctoral level program may be required, prior to determination of transferability of credit.

Financial Matters

For up-to-date information on financial issues such as tuition costs, graduate assistantships, waivers or financial aid, follow the links on the "future students" page, which students may access from the program homepage (www.marshall.edu/lsedd).

Program Expectations

To remain in good standing, and in addition to the Graduate College's standards for good standing, students admitted to the LS EdD Program must meet the following expectations.

- It is critical that all students activate and utilize their official MU email address for program communication. All communications from the program, the college, and the university will go only to students' MU email accounts – not to their home or work accounts. The email process includes a procedure for redirecting email to a home or office, but students must sign into their MU email accounts to do this.
- Should your contact information change at any point in the program, you must notify both your adviser and the LS EdD Office.
- Students must maintain satisfactory progress toward the degree by successfully completing required program coursework two out of three contiguous terms from admission to the program through admission to candidacy while maintaining a 3.5 overall gpa; after admission to candidacy, the student must be enrolled every term (i.e., spring, summer and fall) and must successfully complete the majority of enrollments in research courses while meeting all required course outcomes as articulated in the syllabi for LS 764, LS 765, and LS 797. See "Dissertation Development and Admission to Candidacy" for information related to LS 764 and LS 765 enrollment term limits.
- Students must maintain a GPA of 3.5. Any student who has earned less than a 3.5 GPA, either overall or in their current major, will be placed on academic probation by the Dean of the College of Education and Professional Development. If the student fails to address their academic deficiencies, per University policy and as agreed upon by the LS Program Coordinator and the Dean of the COEPD, s/he will be dismissed from the program. Courses with a grade of "C" or below will not count toward the doctoral degree.
- Students must identify an external committee member no later than the end of the first two courses in the second-year research block. Newly admitted students will be assigned a temporary adviser until a doctoral committee is established.

Doctoral Plan of Study

A “Doctoral Plan of Study” form (**Appendix A**) must be signed by the student, the LS Program Director and the LS Doctoral Program Coordinator no later than one term following admission to the program. Required content and research/foundation and support courses **may not** be completed as independent study courses. All foundations courses must be completed before students may enroll in research courses.

Completion of Coursework and Related Issues: Progressing through the Program

Students should consult with their advisors or chairpersons prior to registering for any course. All courses are offered fully and asynchronously online. Registration for classes may be completed at www.marshall.edu/mymu. Call 1-800-642-9842 ext. 68949 or (304)746-8949 for assistance with registration if needed.

Library Services

Access to library services is available to students via <http://www.marshall.edu/library/>. Extensive collections of bound volumes, digital editions, microfilms, and periodicals are available, and materials not available may be requested from other libraries. More access information will be provided on course websites.

Enrollment

The program expects that students will be continuously enrolled from their acceptance into the program until the completion of the dissertation and graduation. We do understand, however, that occasional hardships occur which may make continuous enrollment difficult. The program offers these options.

Inactive Status: The student who cannot meet the continuous enrollment requirement must submit a written request for a waiver to the LS EdD Coordinator. A student may be granted inactive status for up to one year, providing s/he applies to the program faculty in writing, and the program faculty approve this status. Requests for inactive status should include the reason for the request, with accompanying documentation, and the date the student expects to be able to return to active status. Inactive status is permitted only once during the student’s tenure in the program.

Voluntary Withdrawal from the Program: A student may also choose to withdraw from the program at any time by notifying the LS EdD Coordinator in writing. The LS EdD Coordinator will notify the MU Graduate Admissions and Registrar’s Offices of the withdrawal. A student who withdraws from the program in this manner may seek reinstatement to the program as described below.

Reinstatement into the Program: If the student wishes to be reinstated within one year after dismissal or voluntary withdrawal from the program, the student must file a written request to the LS EdD Coordinator. If the student wishes to be reinstated more than one year after dismissal or voluntary withdrawal, s/he must reapply to the doctoral program on a competitive and selective basis. The acceptance of the previously formed committee, Plan of Study, and associated program materials (e.g., dissertation proposal or prospectus) will be contingent upon the decision of the program faculty and the

student's committee. The program faculty may consider extraordinary circumstances in enforcing inactive status, dismissal from the program, and reinstatement.

Dismissal from the Program: If the student fails to maintain continuous enrollment or satisfactory progress toward degree (see "Program Expectations") or fails to show satisfactory progress toward completion of the dissertation (see "Dissertation Research Hours"), the student may be subject to dismissal from the program.

- The student will be notified by registered mail of dismissal from the program and given the opportunity of due process as defined by the Marshall University Graduate Catalog in writing.
- If the appeal is granted, the student must submit in writing a plan to complete the program in a reasonable time.
- If the appeal is denied, the student will be dismissed from the program. A hold will be placed, preventing the student's registration for classes.

Dissertation Development and Admission to Candidacy

A primary goal of the doctoral program is to assist students in becoming disciplined and productive researchers who have the capacity to improve their own practices and/or the practices of their fields. Toward that end, students who complete the program must execute and write the results of a thoroughly conducted academic investigation (i.e., the dissertation) to demonstrate research proficiency in their professional fields.

To assist them in this process, the program has designed a six-course, three-block research core, each block of which represents a required component in students' admission to candidacy. The research block (i.e., the last 18 hours in the EdD program) is conceived as a series of research cycles on the problems of practice with which students are concerned. By the time they reach the final course, students will have articulated the problem, reviewed the existing research literature, developed research questions, identified a study method or methods, devised instrumentation and protocol procedures, etc., as part of their research courses. The collection of data and completion of the dissertation become the logical last steps in the cycle. In addition to successful completion of all research related coursework provided by the program, students are responsible for successful completion of all required research related training and certifications required by the University.

In the first two six-hour blocks, students will be introduced to fundamental research practices, such as determination of a viable research topic and the ability to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of existing research, focusing particularly on design, method, data collection, conclusion(s), and the theoretical/conceptual research context within which the current study is situated. Basic statistical concepts and analytical processes will be examined, as well as the skills necessary to plan and implement effective survey research practices and design qualitative studies. A research proposal that previews the tentative purpose, design, and significance of the planned dissertation will be developed in LS 764 for purposes of seeking committee approval prior to the student's beginning the full research prospectus.

In the third six-hour block, students will begin the development of a detailed dissertation prospectus in LS 765, including a comprehensive review of related literature, a strong research design featuring consistency of purpose with method(s), sample(s) or population(s), data collection techniques, and analytical processes, as well as an explanation of the potential value or impact of the study. The acceptance of the dissertation prospectus by the chairperson and committee and approval by the university's Institutional Review Board will serve as the final assessments for purposes of admission to doctoral candidacy. ***Students may not proceed with data collection until the MU Institutional Review Board has officially approved the study.*** Students who receive a grade of No Credit (NC) in either LS 764 or LS 765 will be required to repeat the course. Students who receive two consecutive grades of No Credit (NC) in either LS 764 or LS 765 will be dismissed from the program.

Committee Structure

At the beginning of the second year, students will be assigned to a faculty chairperson who will supervise the dissertation research, along with a second LS faculty member and an external committee member selected by the student in consultation with the chairperson to provide additional support throughout the research phase. The external committee member must have a terminal degree and be capable of providing research support to the student. If the external committee member is a member of the MU faculty, s/he cannot have an appointment in the major area. The appointment of the external member is dependent upon the approval of the committee chair, and a current vita must be provided to the LS Doctoral Program Office prior to consideration of the external member for committee membership.

Dissertation Research Hours (LS 797)

After students have been admitted to candidacy, they are required to register for a minimum of nine (9) hours of LS 797 to qualify for graduation. Should the student receive a grade of No Credit (NC) during any term of LS 797, s/he must initiate a meeting with the dissertation adviser before s/he will be permitted to enroll for another term. Students who receive two consecutive grades of No Credit (NC) in LS 797 will be dismissed from the program. A student who has acquired nine credit hours but has not yet successfully defended the dissertation will be required to continue to enroll for at least one (1) additional credit hour of LS 797 in subsequent terms until s/he graduates.

Time Limit

Doctoral candidates are allowed no more than two years beyond approval of the prospectus and admission to candidacy to complete remaining degree requirements (i.e., the written dissertation and oral defense). If a student fails to complete the doctoral degree within two years after admission to candidacy, an extension of time (up to one year) may be granted only by meeting requirements specified by the student's committee.

Preparing the Dissertation Document

Dissertations should be written consistent with the guidelines of the current style manual for the American Psychological Association (APA). Prior to submission to the committee for defense, students must also ensure their documents conform to the requirements established by the university (e.g., for the title page and related front matter). These can be found in the style guide on the University's Graduate Studies website (<https://www.marshall.edu/graduate/students/>). A checklist for electronic theses and dissertations (ETD) is linked to that page.

Defending the Dissertation

After the dissertation chair reviews and approves a draft of the dissertation, copies are distributed to all members of the student's committee. Copies are to be sent to committee members at least three weeks prior to the defense and a request to schedule the defense must be made to the LS EdD [administrative staff](#). The LS EdD administrative staff will schedule the day, time, and location (i.e., either onsite or online) of the dissertation defense as agreed to by the student and the committee.

At the defense, two decisions are made by each committee member:

- whether the student passes the oral defense; and
- whether each committee member will approve and sign the written dissertation at that time.

The dissertation signature page must bear the original signatures of at least all but one of the committee members. If more than one member of the committee, whatever the size of the committee, dissents from approving the dissertation, the degree cannot be recommended. If it is necessary for a substitute faculty member to participate in the final defense, the original committee member must still sign the dissertation signature form verifying approval of the written document.

The dissertation must be submitted to the university by the deadline of the term in which the degree is expected to be granted. This deadline is posted on the Marshall University [Graduate Studies webpage](#). Additional requirements for electronic submission are also listed on this site.

Dissertation Submission Process

There are three steps in the dissertation submission process.

- 1) The student will complete any revisions requested by the committee, after which the dissertation signature page will be signed by all committee members and sent to the student to be inserted into the final copy of the dissertation behind the title page.
- 2) This copy of the dissertation will be submitted for review by MU's ETD reviewers. All edits required by ETD reviewers must be made by the student and resubmitted for final ETD approval.
- 3) Once the student has inserted the signature page and converted the dissertation into a pdf document, it must be sent to ProQuest (<https://www.etsdadmin.com/main/home>). The student will create an account, upload the document, and the Graduate College Office will be notified by ProQuest that the document has been received.

Graduation Procedures

Graduation Applications are located at <https://www.marshall.edu/graduate/current-students/forms-and-information/>. The due dates for the graduation application and the deadlines for dissertation defense each term are posted at <https://www.marshall.edu/academic-calendar/>.

Graduating students are encouraged to celebrate their achievement by participating in the COEPD Hooding Ceremony and the MU Commencement Ceremony, held each Winter (December) and Spring (April/May).

CHECKLIST OF PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

- 1. **Admission** to the program and assignment of a temporary advisor
- 2. **Annual Requirements**
 - a. Continuous enrollment
 - b. Maintenance of a GPA of 3.5
- 3. **Successful completion** of required coursework
- 4. **Dissertation** development and approval
 - a. Work with chairperson and research-core professors to conceptualize study in proposal format.
 - b. Work with chairperson and research-core professors to develop a full prospectus.
 - c. Secure approval of dissertation prospectus by doctoral committee
 - d. Ensure CITInet certification is current.
 - e. Apply to IRBnet for approval of research.
 - f. Register for LS 797 each term while completing the dissertation.
- 5. **Dissertation Defense**
 - a. Completed dissertation is submitted to committee at least three weeks before defense.
 - b. The request to schedule the defense submitted to LS EdD Office three weeks prior to the desired defense date.
 - c. Successfully defend the dissertation and make all required edits. .
 - d. Submit dissertation to ProQuest for initial review. Once the committee has fully approved the ETD, the student submits the final version to [ETD Admin](#) – the ProQuest submission website.
 - e. Submit revised dissertation (if revisions are required) to ProQuest.
- 6. **Graduation preparation**
 - a. File application for graduation by the published deadline.
 - b. File additional paperwork and fees as specified at <http://www.marshall.edu/graduate/current-students/edt>.
 - c. Order cap, gown and hood for commencement and hooding ceremonies.
 - d. Complete exit survey sent by LS EdD Office.

Appendix A: Plan of Study

MARSHALL UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EdD LEADERSHIP STUDIES PLAN OF STUDY

Student:

ID#:

STUDENT REQUIREMENTS: All degree students follow a program Plan of Study and must maintain a cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.5. Failure by the student to return the signed Plan of Study within 30 days of program enrollment will automatically constitute acceptance of its terms and content.

CONTENT COURSES

SESSION OFFERED	COURSE NUMBER/TITLE	SESSION TAKEN	GRADE	18 CREDIT HOURS
Fall	LS 710 Principles of Leadership			3
Fall	LS 724 Organizational Analysis			3
Spring	LS 707 Ethical Theories			3
Spring	LS 709 Leadership in Crisis Situations			3
Summer	LS 735 Policy Studies			3
Summer	LS 756 Current Issues in Leadership			3

RESEARCH COURSES

SESSION OFFERED	COURSE NUMBER/TITLE	SESSION TAKEN	GRADE	27 CREDIT HOURS
All	EDF 625 Qualitative Methods			3
All	EDF 703 Research Design			3
All	LS 764 Advanced Research in Leadership Studies I			3
All	EDF 711 Survey Research			3
All	EDF 676 Statistical Methods			3
All	LS 765 Advanced Research in Leadership Studies II			3
All	LS 797 Doctoral Research			9

<p style="text-align: center;">_____ Student</p> <p style="text-align: center;">_____ Program Director</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">_____ EdD Coordinator</p> <p style="text-align: center;">_____ COEPD Dean</p>
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Appendix B: Glossary

ABD – “All But Dissertation” refers to an individual who completed everything in a doctoral program except the dissertation and, therefore, does not have a doctoral degree

Admission to Candidacy – occurs when a student has completed all of the requirements for the degree up to and including prospectus development; the student is said to be a candidate for the doctoral degree at this time and the degree must be completed within three years from this date

COEPD - College of Education and Professional Development

Committee Chairperson – a major area faculty member with doctoral graduate faculty status who serves as the student’s primary advisor throughout the doctoral process

Continuous Enrollment – enrollment in and completion of coursework at least two out of every three contiguous terms; following admission to candidacy, the student must remain enrolled every term until the degree is completed

Dissertation – the document representing the student’s research as evidence of her/his ability to contribute to the research in the major field

Doctoral Committee – individuals with graduate faculty status appointed by the LS EdD Office to serve a support role in each student’s dissertation research and defense

EdD – Doctor of Education

ETD – Electronic Theses and Dissertations

GPA – Grade Point Average

GRE – Graduate Records Examination

Handbook of Record – the “Doctoral Student/Faculty Handbook” that is current for the term during which the student is admitted to the doctoral degree program

IRB – Institutional Review Board, which reviews research proposals to determine whether the execution of the research poses any danger to any individuals or liability to the University

myMU – myMU.marshall.edu website of current information, schedules, help links, and library services for students and faculty; the method by which the student registers for classes, pays tuition and fees, reviews transcripts, etc.

POS – Plan of Study

Prospectus – a plan for a research project, sometimes represented as the first three chapters in a dissertation

Website – the doctoral programs website where announcements, forms, and links to other MU sites can be accessed (www.marshall.edu/lsedd)

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